

David H. Petraeus, USA, incoming chief, Office of Security Transition—Iraq. A tape was

not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks Honoring the 2004 Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots May 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Welcome back. The mighty New England Pats have returned, just like he told me they would. It's such an honor to welcome the team back here. I'm especially glad to see Tom Brady. I'm trying to figure out what it's like to be around a real celebrity. [Laughter]

Bob Kraft is a owner who knows how to win. And congratulations on winning the Super Bowl. What I appreciate is the fact that in the contracts you sign with the players that you include a commitment to participate in at least 10 public service events each year. I appreciate the commitment. I also appreciate the players' commitment as well.

You've got a great head coach, obviously. You can't win Super Bowls 66 percent of the time in a 3-year period unless you've got a great coach. Congratulations.

I want to congratulate all the players who are here. For those of you who weren't here 2 years ago, this is a pretty cool place to come. I want to congratulate the people who work to make a team go well, the trainers and the person—the equipment personnel, the people who never get the—who never get heralded. I understand it's—the players, obviously, are the ones that make it happen, but there are a lot of people behind the scenes that have worked long and hard to support these guys. And I want to congratulate you as well.

I appreciate Sununu, the Senator from New Hampshire. He's a huge fan of the team, as is Ed Markey and Jim McGovern, people from the mighty Massachusetts delegation. We're proud you're here. Thanks for coming. Andy Card, the Chief of Staff

here at the White House, is a longtime Patriots fan. He's constantly reminding me how great the Pats are, on a Sunday by Sunday basis. And Andrew Natsios as well is a Pats fan. Obviously, we've got quite a few here. If the Rose Garden were bigger, there would be a lot more people here, I assume. Welcome. I'm glad you're here.

The thing—a couple of things impressed me. One, you never lost a home game. That's really good marketing. [Laughter] That's a smart way to do it, to fill up your stadium and have your fans go home happy every game. I watched some of your games. I appreciate the dramatic comebacks that you were capable of making. I like it when a kicker ends up winning the game. You like it when the kicker ends up winning the game. I know Adam is with us today. I am really impressed at how cool you are under fire, and how—like, I need a few suggestions before a press conference, if you don't mind.

I also appreciate so very much the coach. I don't know what it's like in the locker room, but I remember when you were here last year—or 2 years ago—and you said you were going to say a few words and you said like four words. [Laughter]

Bill Belichick. I got carried away.

The President. Yes, right. You got carried away. [Laughter]

Here's what I like about this team: They had a thousand hours of volunteer service to communities in Massachusetts and New England. That's a lot of hours for people who are spending a lot of time practicing and reading playbooks. That is an unbelievably important example for champions to set for others. I know you supported the Boys and

Girls Club and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, the Massachusetts 9/11 Fund, the R.O.S.E. Fund to end domestic violence. I really want to thank you for that. Listen, it's one thing to be a champ on the field, and obviously, that's what every player strives for. But to be able to be a complete person like you have been is really important, and you set such a good example of what it means to serve something greater than yourself.

I know there's a lot of fans that come to your game. You also know there are fans that are rooting for you who wear the uniform of the United States military—a lot of Pats fans out there who are scattered around the world, doing everything they can to defend us and to protect us. They are cheering in places like Afghanistan and in Iraq and in other countries. It is—I can't tell you how important it is for them to see the action from home, to see the great players performing on the field of play. It's also important for them to know that our players care for them a lot, that they under-

stand that we're grateful for their service and grateful to their families as well for the sacrifices they're making.

We have got some unbelievable troops, fantastic men and women who understand that they're serving something important, and that is security for our country and peace and freedom around the world. And the fact that players are willing to serve their communities reinforces that service of our troops.

So thanks for what you do. Congratulations for getting back here to the Rose Garden. My hope, of course, is that I'm back here again to see you next year. *[Laughter]* Your hope is that you come back.

Welcome back. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:32 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Brady, quarterback, Robert Kraft, chairman and owner, Bill Belichick, head coach, and Adam Vinatieri, kicker, New England Patriots.

Remarks at Butterfield Junior High School in Van Buren, Arkansas May 11, 2004

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I appreciate it. Go ahead and be seated. Thanks for coming. Todd, thanks for having us. *[Laughter]* That story he told reminds me of the time when I had just got elected Governor of Texas, and a friend of mine said, "Why don't you call old Bascom Bentley on the phone?" He's an east Texas guy, and he said, "Why don't you call Bascom Bentley on the phone and just wish him the best." So I picked up the phone and dialed old Judge Bentley. He's one of these east Texas judges. You probably know the kind I'm talking about here in Arkansas. *[Laughter]* I said, "Judge, this is George W. Bush calling." He said,

"Come on, Cliff, quit pulling my leg." *[Laughter]*

So, Todd, I understand how those phone calls can go. *[Laughter]* But we are serious about coming here because Butterfield Junior High is a place of academic achievement. That's why I'm here. It's a place—I'm here to congratulate this school and to hold you up as an example to the country. You're raising the bar. You see, this is a school that expects the best for every student. You're reaching for high standards, and more importantly, you're making progress toward meeting those standards. You're doing your job.

I know the school year ends on May 27th. And I bet some of the students are